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*courage is contagious*

## Viewing cable 06TELAVIV2787, HERZOG LAMENTS TIMING OF SECURITY CRISES ON

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### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#06TELAVIV2787**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
06TELAVIV2787	2006-07-14 11:19	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Tel Aviv

Appears in these articles:

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This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TEL AVIV 002787

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/14/2016

TAGS: [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [KWBG](#) [JO IS](#) [ECONOMY](#) [AND](#) [FINANCE](#)

SUBJECT: HERZOG LAMENTS TIMING OF SECURITY CRISES ON  
TOURISM INDUSTRY

Classified By: Ambassador Richard H. Jones for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

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SUMMARY  
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1. (C) In a meeting with the Ambassador on July 12, Tourism Minister Isaac Herzog indicated that Israel would soon retaliate against targets in Lebanon for Hizballah's attack across Israel's northern border. Herzog lamented the timing of the dual crises in Gaza and Lebanon, claiming the deteriorating security situation would ruin what had otherwise been a record year for tourism to Israel. He said that Israel remains committed to former Tourism Minister (and current Finance Minister) Avraham Hirschson's project for a Christian heritage park near Lake Kinneret. Herzog expressed embarrassment at hearing the Ambassador's report of an American visitor's detention and harassment by security officers at Ben Gurion Airport and promised to address the incident with the head of Israel's security service. Herzog also requested that the Ambassador re-examine language on organized crime in the Department's Travel Warning for Israel. End summary.

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HERZOG ON CRISIS WITH LEBANON  
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2. (C) In a meeting on July 12, Tourism Minister Isaac Herzog (Labor) told the Ambassador that the Hizballah incursion across Israel's northern border and kidnapping of two IDF soldiers "required action." The Ambassador agreed, but cautioned that Israel's retaliatory action should be focused on Hizballah rather than the Lebanese government, and

Israel's rhetoric should also concentrate on its sponsors, Syria and Iran. Herzog questioned what Israel would gain from this approach, and the Ambassador explained that attacking the Lebanese government and Lebanese infrastructure would likely elevate popular Lebanese support for Hizballah while diminishing Israel's support from the international community. Herzog confided to the Ambassador that Prime Minister Olmert and Defense Minister Peretz are well aware that "they aren't Sharon," and that they "don't want to appear castrated" to either the Israeli public, or Israel's enemies. Herzog suggested that a public statement of support from the USG or White House would help shore up Olmert politically and enable him to target his response.

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INVESTING IN EVANGELICAL TOURISM  
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13. (C) Herzog lamented the timing of the dual crises in Gaza and Lebanon, claiming the deteriorating security situation would ruin what had otherwise been a record year for tourism to Israel. The Minister said that Evangelical Christian tourism from the United States was an important component of the 37-percent rise in 2006, and commented that his ministry had recently opened an office marketing to Evangelicals in Los Angeles. According to Herzog, former Tourism Minister (and current Finance Minister) Avraham Hirschson continues to support a commitment he had made to the Evangelical community to build a Christian heritage park near Lake Kinneret. Herzog said that Hirschson was working on legislation to purchase, zone, and allot 200 dunams of land to the non-profit National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) for construction of the Christian tourist attraction.

14. (C) The Ambassador asked Herzog if the ministry's plans for Evangelical marketing would benefit the Galilee's dwindling Arab Christian community. Herzog responded that he had employed an Arab Christian from Nazareth as his liaison between the Evangelical community and the Galilee Christian community. Herzog also remarked that Christian and Druze villages had recently been designated a "special priority" for economic development, and that the construction of new hotels in the region would help with local unemployment. (Comment: Herzog was likely referring to a recent amendment to the 2002 Capital Investments Encouragement Ordinance that will classify all minority settlements -- including recognized Israeli Arab towns and villages -- as Development Area "A" priority regions. The Law for the Encouragement of Capital Investments provides financial assistance to entrepreneurs for building factories, hotels and tourist attractions in Development "A" areas. End Comment.) The Ambassador encouraged Herzog to work with American universities to market Israel, including the Galilee region, as a safe destination for American students to learn Arabic from native speakers. Herzog was intrigued by the idea and said he would enlist an Israeli academic to help him research it further.

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NEGATIVE EFFECT OF SECURITY PRECAUTIONS ON TOURISM  
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15. (C) The Ambassador asked Herzog if he was aware of the deterrent effect on tourism of the security procedures at Ben Gurion Airport. Herzog said that he had heard of the problem, and that he was gathering evidence of abuses to convince security officials that a better solution must be found. The Ambassador recounted the recent case of a young American woman who was detained for several hours, rudely interrogated, stripped naked, and searched -- evidently merely because her American passport showed that she had been born in Egypt. Herzog said that the incident was "embarrassing," and asked the Ambassador to send him the details of this particular incident, as well as any others that occur. He added that he would include them as evidence in his argument to the head of Israel's security services.

16. (C) Herzog requested that the Ambassador re-examine language on organized crime in the Department's Travel Warning for Israel, and that it be removed if possible. The Ambassador assured Herzog that he would review the language when the warning is next revised. (Comment: Herzog was not aware that the Travel Warning already differentiates between the risks of traveling to the West Bank/Gaza and travel within Green Line Israel. End comment.)

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<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/telaviv>

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JONES